

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.5/1993/10
6 January 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Thirty-third session
Vienna, 8-17 February 1993
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

MONITORING OF INTERNATIONAL PLANS AND PROGRAMMES OF ACTION

Draft calendar of activities to mark the tenth anniversary of the
International Youth Year and draft world programme of action
for youth towards the year 2000 and beyond

Report of the Secretary-General

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INTRODUCTION

1. In connection with the observance in 1995 of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1991/11 of 30 May 1991, decided that an open-ended ad hoc working group of the Commission for Social Development should be established at its thirty-third session in order to review and appraise progress achieved and obstacles identified in implementing the objectives of the International Youth Year; to prepare a draft calendar of activities to mark the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year; and to prepare a draft world youth programme of action towards the year 2000 and beyond, taking into account regional youth programmes of action. The Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission, for discussion by the working group, such a draft calendar of activities and draft programme of action.* The present report was prepared in accordance with the request of the Council.

I. TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR: OPPORTUNITY FOR REASSESSMENT

2. The tenth anniversary provides an opportunity for a fundamental reassessment of the role and purpose of United Nations activities in the field of youth, and the philosophy upon which they are based. Global developments have also made it particularly necessary to take stock at this juncture.

3. First, the profound consequences in many spheres of United Nations activity of the transformed geopolitical map and the end of East-West ideological rivalry will be felt in the field of youth in particular. Youth policy had in the past often been an object of manipulation along ideological lines. The period of preparation for International Youth Year, and the observance of the year itself, were marked by heightened political tensions which adversely influenced the preparation of the guidelines adopted in 1985; they were in large part responsible also for the failure then to reach agreement on a substantial world youth programme of action. Today, some of the language of the guidelines looks dated and some of the concepts appear obsolete; on the other hand, some of the major gaps are even more obvious.

*Earlier, the General Assembly, in its resolution 44/59 of 8 December 1989, had requested the Secretary-General to include in his report on the implementation of the guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth a draft programme of action to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. In resolution 45/103 of 14 December 1990, the Assembly had "emphasized the need for a review and appraisal of the progress achieved and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the guidelines and, on the basis of the evaluation, for preparation of a global youth programme of action towards the year 2000 and beyond, with a target orientation and within a specific time-frame". It had also requested the Secretary-General to prepare the draft programme of action "in accordance with proposals to be submitted by Member States, the United Nations and non-governmental youth organizations and in consultation with the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and the relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations".

4. Second, during the last decade the cumulative effects of a gathering pace of change in many spheres of life has become evident. The world today is very different from the world of 20 or 30 years ago, when the attitudes to the role of young people in society were formed, attitudes which shaped current policies and which continue to influence policies concerning the aspirations and needs of young people.

5. The situation of young people differs from country to country, and the differences in prospects for young people from different social backgrounds and material circumstances are striking, typically reflecting the often sharp cleavages in society at large. Changes in the context in which young people live, while not occurring uniformly, have penetrated, nevertheless, almost all aspects of life everywhere.

6. It is thus timely to make an assessment of the impact of change on the lives and prospects of young people and of the consequent need to adjust policies and activities to the contemporary setting, while recognizing and reaffirming that life confronts young people with unchanging problems and challenges as they pass from childhood to adulthood and strive to find an appropriate place or role in society. The tenth anniversary of International Youth Year provides, similarly, an opportunity for restating the basic principles and objectives of United Nations activities in the field of youth, updated to reflect current conditions and projected youth needs to the year 2000 and beyond. The world youth programme of action might thus appropriately be introduced by a statement of intent, which would combine a statement of principles, universally valid and timeless, reflecting basic values of the United Nations, in so far as they relate to the specific circumstances of young men and women, and a statement, in the particular contemporary setting, of the perceptions of young people regarding their needs and concerns.

II. ACTIVITIES TO MARK THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR

7. The draft calendar of activities to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year is given in annex I. It is in two parts. The first, covering the period up to the end of 1994, which might be called the preparatory phase, provides a list of suggested activities intended largely to raise awareness and initiate substantive actions. The second, which might be called the observance phase, is geared to developing capacities for youth policy programming and implementation.

8. It is anticipated that Governments, the United Nations system and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, particularly youth organizations, would consider how best and most appropriately to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year. They would inform the Secretariat of the United Nations, through its Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, as the focal point for youth-related activities, of the specific activities they were planning. Information thus collected would be included in the calendar covering the observance phase.

9. The calendar will be updated in the light of comments made on the draft calendar annexed to the present report, and will incorporate additional suggestions and information received from Governments, the United Nations system and other concerned intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. It will be disseminated periodically in order to publicize the activities being planned and widen their audience.

III. PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND

10. In annex II, a tentative framework of a world youth programme is provided, together with suggested elements or building blocks for constructing the final action programme to the year 2000 and beyond.

11. The framework itself is made up of a base containing some of the means by which youth issues may be addressed and supported at the international level, and a superstructure consisting of the subject areas that need to be addressed. The focus at present is on the following priority areas: education; employment; hunger; health; environment; and drug abuse. Other subject areas may be added subsequently.

12. In preparing the framework and elements of a world youth programme of action, account has been taken of the views expressed at the Youth Forum of the United Nations System, held at Vienna from 27 to 29 May 1991, and at the eighth meeting of the informal inter-agency working group at the technical level on youth, held at Vienna from 30 to 31 May 1991. Account was also taken of comments and suggestions made in the General Assembly, at its forty-sixth session, on the report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes in the field of youth (A/46/360), which contained a description of approaches to developing a world youth programme of action, as well as comments and suggestions made on the first preliminary draft of the programme of action as elaborated by an informal working group convened at Vienna from 9 to 13 December 1991.*

13. The draft programme of action contained in annex II, which is preliminary and tentative, will be revised in the light of the views expressed in the Commission, and in the further consultations envisaged with Governments, the United Nations system, and other concerned intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, particularly youth organizations. Revised drafts will be considered by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session in 1994, and subsequently by the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-fourth session in early 1995, before being submitted for consideration and eventual adoption by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session in 1995, marking the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year.

*The draft was circulated to States members of the Commission for Social Development, the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system and non-governmental youth organizations. Comments and suggestions were received from the Governments of Austria, China, Finland, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Russian Federation and Spain, as well as from the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the All-Pakistan Youth Federation, the Council of European Youth Committees, HOPE '87 and Mobility International.

Annex 1

DRAFT CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES TO MARK THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY
OF INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR

A. Preparatory phase (1993-1994)

1. Activities at national level

1. Preparations could be facilitated by the establishment of a coordinating or preparatory committee at the highest level of government, including in its membership youth representatives. Such a body would undertake some or all of the following tasks:

(a) To develop a detailed programme based on an appropriate analysis of the situation of youth;

(b) To review existing youth-related national legislation, policies, plans and programmes, including administrative structures and services for youth;

(c) To collate and disseminate existing data and research on youth-related issues;

(d) To promote action-oriented research and studies by academic institutions, research institutes and youth organizations;

(e) To launch public information campaigns, using the mass media and other information networks, to promote awareness of youth issues and reinforce a positive attitude towards young people;

(f) To raise awareness of particular youth issues by promoting "creative" events, such as drawing, photographic, art and essay competitions, the results of which could be published in 1995;

(g) To promote communication between government and youth groups, and between the generations in different formal and informal settings, thereby encouraging the active involvement of young people in the preparation and commemoration of the tenth anniversary and in the shaping of youth policies.

2. Activities at international and regional level

(a) Non-governmental organizations

2. International and regional non-governmental organizations will clearly have an important role, and might thus wish to consider how best they could reorient some of their activities to mark the tenth anniversary. Some of the possibilities for action are:

(a) To carry out or support independent surveys on the situation of young people, support research and facilitate publication or dissemination of research findings, especially where other channels of distribution are difficult to access;

(b) To conduct independent surveys and assessments of existing youth policies, plans and programmes, identifying current and emerging youth issues;

(c) To facilitate the publishing and exchange of information on youth activities, using their publications and information networks;

(d) To promote cultural and educational exhibits and radio and television programmes, highlighting international cooperation on youth issues and concerns;

(e) To encourage their regional and national offices to assist Governments in activities related to the anniversary of the International Youth Year.

(b) United Nations agencies and bodies

3. United Nations agencies and bodies may be expected to provide appropriate support to the activities marking the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, at the level and in a manner corresponding to their respective mandates. In planning their programmes for the period 1993-1994, they might wish to give special consideration to how these could be made to support the activities marking the anniversary. Various possibilities might be considered, as listed below:

(a) To link to the preparations for the tenth anniversary activities pertaining to other major international events, such as the International Year of the Family (1994), the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace (1995), the celebrations of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations (1995) and the World Summit for Social Development (1995);

(b) To support Governments in strengthening their national youth policies, programmes and strategies;

(c) To organize meetings, seminars, conferences and workshops on specific topics of particular relevance to youth;

(d) To give special attention to youth issues in 1995 in their regular bulletins, journals and newsletters;

(e) To mobilize the substantive resources of their regional and national offices with a view to assisting youth non-governmental organizations in their preparatory activities.

B. Observance phase (1995)

1. Activities at national level

4. It is not yet possible to decide the most appropriate manner in which the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year might be marked in different countries, at different levels of Government and by the different non-governmental entities concerned. The type of activities that should be suggested for implementation in 1995 will depend on the extent to which plans drawn up for the preparatory phase in 1993 and 1994 are finalized and implemented. At this stage, Governments, in cooperation with national youth organizations, might be requested to plan ahead, so that the tenth anniversary may provide an opportunity to initiate substantive measures in favour of youth, taking advantage of the publicity generated by the anniversary and by events such as the following:

(a) Conferences, workshops and debates on youth-related issues, in which prominent persons in the community would take part, for instance, political leaders and scholars, and especially youth leaders;

(b) Statements and appearances by prominent political personalities including, where possible, heads of Government, highlighting the positive contributions young people make to society;

(c) Issuance of commemorative stamps, posters and other souvenir materials;

(d) Designating a national youth day, week or month during which youth issues could be highlighted in a variety of national events, by means of a special focus on youth, for example, in book fairs and other cultural events or sports competitions;

(e) Special events organized by young people to draw attention to days designated for commemoration by the United Nations and other events widely observed, for example, International Women's Day (8 March), World Health Day (7 April), World Environment Day (5 June), International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June), International Day of Peace (third Tuesday in September), United Nations Day (24 October), World AIDS Day (1 December) and Human Rights Day (10 December).

2. Activities at international level

5. The General Assembly decided, in its resolution 45/103, to devote a plenary meeting at its fiftieth session to the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year, which will be, also, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The Assembly might wish to mark these events in some special manner, for example:

(a) By agreeing to a United Nations statement of intent on youth in conjunction with the adoption in 1995 of a world youth programme of action;

(b) By designating, in 1995, an International Youth Day.

Annex II

DRAFT WORLD YOUTH PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO THE YEAR 2000 AND BEYOND

A. Means for implementing the programme

1. Data

1. A capacity to collect and analyse data is necessary to implement a world programme effectively, to ensure accurate monitoring of changing events and to evaluate progress on the basis of comparable data. An ability to compile and compare statistical information should be established or strengthened, at both national and international levels. It would be helpful to strengthen networks of institutions involved in data-gathering, with a view to assisting the United Nations in the preparation of general and specific reports on progress in implementation of the programme.

2. In this respect, the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat provides a useful function which should be continued and expanded. The youth data programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) might effectively be coordinated with the activities of the Statistical Office, as was also the case of the data bank programme on adolescent health of the World Health Organization (WHO). Other bodies and agencies of the United Nations system should be invited to contribute data pertaining to their areas of expertise to a combined information bank on youth. The International Drug Abuse Assessment System established by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) could be invited to include a component on youth and drugs. An inventory of innovative and successful youth programmes and projects might be prepared, computerized and made available to all interested users by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

2. Research

3. Closely related to the need for data on youth is the need for research on specific topics of concern to youth. Cooperative arrangements between the United Nations and international, regional and national research institutions dealing with youth issues should be further developed. A goal should be the widest possible dissemination of recent studies and articles on the situation of young people in various regions of the world and on changing policy approaches to youth.

3. Public information

4. Awareness of youth issues and concerns are crucial for appropriate planning and action in the field of youth. Publications currently produced by the United Nations should be supplemented, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information, by the ad hoc production of leaflets and posters, particularly in connection with special events. A regular series of audiovisual programmes related to the target areas of the world youth programme of action could be initiated and disseminated through United Nations public information channels, governmental and non-governmental organizations and commercial outlets. To encourage support for youth programmes, young people and youth organizations should be encouraged and assisted to organize activities that draw attention to issues of concern and to the activities they propose to undertake in the context of the programme.

4. Coordination

5. Several mechanisms currently exist within the United Nations system for coordination of activities on youth. Channels have also been developed between the United Nations and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with these issues. Such mechanisms could be strengthened.

6. Entities within the United Nations system responsible for youth issues should consider reviewing their medium-term plans to include programme elements of direct interest to young people. They might also consider the possibility of devoting resources from their programme budgets to activities in support of the World Youth Programme of Action.

5. National policy statements on youth

7. Just as a global policy consensus will be important to the success of the programme at the international level, formulation and promulgation by each Member State of the United Nations of a national youth policy statement and designation of a national governmental entity responsible for youth issues will be crucial to its success.

8. The United Nations should assist Governments, at their request, by providing model frameworks for such policy statements and for defining the organizational responsibilities of the governmental entities responsible for youth issues.

6. Action in the private and voluntary sectors

9. A crucial element of the programme should be a recognition that governmental action alone will not be sufficient to ensure its success. The private and voluntary sectors should be fully involved in the development and implementation of the World Youth Programme of Action.

10. There is a need for further expansion and regularization of channels of communication between the United Nations and non-governmental youth organizations. Provisions for the involvement of youth and non-governmental youth organizations in the formulation of the programme have already been established by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/103. Efforts should be made to ensure that those provisions are implemented. Youth and youth organizations should also be involved in a longer-term process of review, appraisal and periodic reformulation of the goals and targets of the programme.

11. In addition to encouraging and enabling youth to become involved during the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of the programme of action, the programme should also encourage and develop youth exchanges as well as sports, technical and intercultural cooperation among youth and youth organizations. These activities should emphasize mutual dependence between young people and society at large.

12. Issue-specific voluntary organizations, particularly those concerned with education, employment, health, hunger, the environment and drug abuse, should be encouraged to increase the involvement of young people in their planning and activities. The programme should inform such organizations of its purposes and activities and encourage mutual cooperation.

7. Outreach

13. United Nations programmes of technical cooperation might be encouraged to consider their impact on the situation of young people, and assisted to include specific youth components in their activities. Advisory services should be made available to Governments, upon their request, to promote the development of integrated national youth policies and programmes. Consultations among various United Nations agencies and bodies on technical cooperation in the field of youth should be strengthened. This would include an increase in the number of transsectoral youth components in projects of the United Nations Development Programme and other organizations of the United Nations system.

8. An overall enabling mechanism for the programme

14. The success of the World Youth Programme of Action will depend on the soundness of the principles, strategies and targets that underlie it. Significant expressions of commitment by the institutions responsible for its adoption and implementation will also be required. Without such commitment by governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental entities at the national, regional and international levels, the programme will run the risk of remaining little more than a statement of intent and goodwill.

15. Therefore, development of an overall enabling mechanism for the programme is necessary. Such a mechanism should engage, on a continuing basis, the political and financial resources necessary to ensure that the programme may operate efficiently and effectively.

16. It may be desirable to investigate the feasibility of establishing a standing conference of ministers responsible for youth affairs, to meet at five-year intervals beginning in 1996. The purpose and main function would be to ensure effective launching and monitoring of the programme at the national, regional and international levels.

17. Substantial additional resources for the United Nations Youth Fund would ensure that it could carry out its mandated functions and would assist in the implementation of the World Youth Programme of Action. An advisory group of eminent persons might be convened as "friends of the United Nations Youth Fund" to recommend ways to secure and maintain the resource base of the Fund.

B. Subject areas

18. The World Youth Programme of Action will have to be carried out primarily at the national and local levels, supported by appropriate action at the international and regional levels, as indicated. The following action programme at the national and local level is proposed. It focuses on the six priority areas (education, employment, hunger, health, environment and drug abuse) identified by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/103. Targets are grouped under the relevant priority area.

1. Education

19. Although progress towards universal education and literacy has been fairly impressive in recent times, the number of illiterates will continue to grow and the least developed countries are likely to fall short of universal primary education by the year 2000. Two main concerns regarding current systems of

education may be expressed. The first concerns the paucity of educational opportunities for young women, migrants, refugees, minorities, young people in rural areas and young people who suffer disabilities. The second concerns the relevance of education to employment, and its usefulness for assisting young people in the transition to adulthood.

20. In order to encourage development of educational systems more in tune with the current needs of young people and the future needs of their societies, it would be helpful to share experience and to investigate alternative arrangements, such as informal and non-formal arrangements for provision of basic literacy.

Targets

(a) Achievement of 85 per cent literacy and numeracy among the youth population by a determined date

21. National Governments should establish literacy and numeracy targets as part of national youth policy. Non-governmental youth organizations and education organizations such as the International Council on Adult Education and Literacy should develop youth-to-youth programmes for literacy and numeracy. Particular attention should be given to specific groups of youth in distressed circumstances, including migrant and refugee youth and poor youth in urban and rural areas, as well as to special problems such as literacy and numeracy for blind youth and youth with other disabilities. Consideration should be given to developing programmes enabling retired and elderly people to teach youth literacy and numeracy skills.

(b) Appreciation for the cultural heritage and contemporary patterns of society

22. National Governments should establish programmes to educate young people in the cultural heritage of their societies. Governments should institute, in cooperation with non-governmental youth organizations, travel programmes and work camps to help youth understand cultural diversity and participate in the preservation of the cultural stock. UNESCO, in cooperation with organizations such as the International Council of Museums and Historic Sites, should expand international programmes by which young people from different cultures may help restore major international cultural sites.

(c) Vocational and professional training

23. Governments and educational institutions should establish guidelines which ensure that vocational and professional training remain relevant to the requirements of the national economy. Governments should also establish systems for evaluation of student educational achievement and preparedness for employment. Regional and international intergovernmental organizations, in cooperation with non-governmental youth organizations, should establish model standards of excellence in skills and professional training.

(d) Training-for-enterprise programmes

24. Governments, in cooperation with regional and international organizations, should formulate model programmes of training for youth in individual and cooperative enterprises. They should establish self-contained enterprise centres where young people may plan and test their enterprise venture concepts.

(e) Infrastructure for training of youth workers and youth leaders

25. Governments should assess the adequacy of facilities and programmes to train youth workers and youth leaders, including the adequacy of curricula and staff resources. On the basis of such assessments, Governments should take steps to plan and implement relevant training programmes. Non-governmental youth organizations should formulate and disseminate model training courses for use by member organizations.

26. The United Nations and other interested organizations should investigate the establishment of an international youth worker and youth leader training institute, with priority given to accepting participants from developing countries. In cooperation with concerned organizations that provide training opportunities for youth, including internships and volunteer programmes, it should establish an inventory of and system-wide guidelines for such programmes.

27. Organizations should assist young people in developing countries to obtain places at suitable training institutions in developed countries or other parts of the developing world.

2. Employment

28. Unemployment and underemployment among youth is a problem everywhere. The problem has worsened in recent years because of global recession which often affects developing countries most. The difficulty of finding suitable employment is compounded by a host of other problems confronting young people, including illiteracy and insufficient training, and is worsened by periods of economic slow-down. In some countries the problems caused by the influx of young people into the employment market are acute. According to estimates of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), more than 100 million new jobs would have to be created within the next 20 years in order to provide suitable employment for the growing number of young people in the economically active populations of developing countries. The situation of girls and young women, as well as of youth with disabilities, refugee youth, migrant youth and minorities warrants urgent attention.

29. The crisis of youth unemployment is also a crisis of opportunity for young people to participate in the life of society. Advances in technology and communications, coupled with improved productivity, have reduced the relative importance of the human factor in production. More and more products are now produced using fewer and fewer workers. Young people are among the most severely affected by this development because it portends a future of declining opportunity for work and reduced prospects for fulfilment.

Targets

(a) Opportunities for self-employment

30. Governments and organizations should create grant schemes to provide seed money to encourage and support enterprise and employment programmes for young people. Businesses and enterprises should be enlisted to provide counterpart financial and technical support for such schemes. Cooperative schemes involving young people in production and marketing of goods and services should be developed. Formation of youth development banks should be considered. The United-Nations-system-affiliated Committee to Promote Aid to Cooperatives

should develop models for youth-run cooperatives in developed and developing countries. Such models would include guidelines for management training and training in entrepreneurial techniques. They should be available for dissemination in 1995, at the time of consideration by the General Assembly of the World Youth Programme of Action.

(b) Employment opportunities for specific groups of the youth population

31. Within funds designated to promote youth employment, Governments should designate fixed percentages for programmes supporting the efforts of young women, youth with disabilities, youth returning from military service, migrant youth and refugee youth. Youth organizations should be directly involved with the planning and implementation of these programmes.

(c) Voluntary community services for youth

32. Where they do not yet already exist, Governments should consider the establishment of youth voluntary service programmes. Such programmes would provide alternatives to military service, or might constitute a required element in educational curricula, depending on national policies and priorities. Work camps, environmental protection and intergenerational cooperation programmes should be included among the opportunities offered. Youth organizations should be directly involved in the planning and implementation of such voluntary service programmes.

(d) The needs created by technological change

33. Governments, particularly in developed countries, should ensure that employment opportunities are created for young people in fields that are rapidly evolving as a result of technological innovation. A subset of the employment data compiled by Governments should track entry of youth into those fields marked by newly emerging technologies.

34. Special attention should be paid to developing and disseminating approaches which promote flexibility in training systems and collaboration between training institutions and employers, especially for young people in high-technology industries.

3. Hunger

35. Hunger remains one of the most serious and intractable threats to humanity. It prevents those who suffer from it, most often youth and children, from taking part in society, even when opportunities for such participation exist. Hunger is the result of many factors: unwise exploitation of natural resources; environmental pollution; natural and human-made disasters; conflicts between traditional and contemporary production systems; mismanagement of distribution; maldistribution of financial resources; population growth; and armed conflicts.

Targets

(a) Making farming more rewarding and life in agricultural areas more attractive

36. Governments should enhance educational and cultural services in rural areas to make them more attractive to young people. Experimental farming

programmes directed to young people should be initiated, and extension services expanded to maintain improvements in agricultural production and marketing.

37. Local and national Governments should organize cultural events that enhance exchanges between urban and rural youth. Youth organizations should organize conventions and meetings in rural areas, with special efforts to enlist the cooperation of rural populations, including rural youth.

(b) Skill-training for income generation by young people

38. Governments, in cooperation with youth organizations, should develop training programmes for youth which improve methods of agricultural production and marketing. Training should be based on rural economic needs and the needs of young people in rural areas for the development of production. Attention should be given in such programmes to young women, youth returning to rural areas from the cities, youth with disabilities, refugee and migrant youth, and youth returning from military service.

(c) Land grants for young people with special needs

39. Governments should provide grants of land to youth and youth organizations, supported by financial and technical assistance and training. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and ILO should document and disseminate information about national experience with land-grant and settlement schemes for use by Governments.

(d) Cooperation between urban and rural youth in food production and distribution

40. Non-governmental youth organizations should organize direct-marketing groups, including production and distribution cooperatives, to bring agricultural products directly from young farmers to consumers. The aim of such groups should be to reduce food shortages and losses from defective systems of food transport to markets.

(e) The relationship between hunger among young people and population policy

41. Governments should study more closely the relationship between hunger and rapid population growth and take the relationship into account in formulating their national youth policies. Governments, in cooperation with youth organizations, should make information and services related to this issue more widely available to young people.

4. Health

42. Young people in all parts of the world suffer from poor health as a result of societal conditions as well as their own actions. Often, poor health is caused by lack of information. The resulting problems include sexually transmitted diseases, including infection with the human immunodeficiency (HIV) virus; early pregnancies; lack of hygiene and sanitation leading to infection, infestation and diarrhoea; genetic and congenital diseases; psychological and mental diseases; narcotic and psychotropic drug abuse; misuse of alcohol and tobacco; unwarranted risk-taking and destructive activity, resulting in accidents; malnutrition; poor spacing of births; and lack of health services for youth.

Targets

(a) Development of appropriate sex education programmes

43. Governments should develop, with educational institutions, curricula to provide appropriate sex education at all levels of the educational system. National and local Governments, in cooperation with non-governmental youth organizations, should develop opportunities for peer counselling and similar youth-to-youth programmes to convey to young people the dangers of unsafe sexual practices.

(b) Promotion of good sanitation and hygiene practices

44. Governments, in cooperation with youth organizations, should promote the establishment of national youth health associations to promote good sanitation and hygiene.

(c) Promotion of family planning programmes for young people

45. Governments should develop complete family planning service programmes for young people, designed to inform them of the requirements for healthy family formation and to provide counselling services for youth in distressed circumstances.

(d) Prevention of disease and illness among youth resulting from poor health practices

46. Governments, in cooperation with youth organizations, should investigate the possibility of adopting policies for discouraging tobacco use among young people, including the banning of advertisements of tobacco products.

47. Programmes should be instituted which train medical and paramedical students in issues of good health particularly relevant to young people. Research into such issues should be promoted, particularly research into the effects and treatment of drug abuse and addiction. Youth organizations should be enlisted in these efforts.

48. Governments should enhance the scope of drug control agencies established under the provisions of existing United Nations conventions to monitor the distribution of addictive drugs. In accordance with the treaties, government entities and non-governmental organizations should cooperate in carrying out demand reduction programmes for illicit drugs, tobacco and alcohol.

(e) Combating malnutrition among young people

49. Governments should promote out-of-school and post-primary-school health projects by individuals and youth organizations, emphasizing information on healthy eating practices. School lunch programmes, provision of food supplements and similar services should be available whenever possible to help ensure proper diets for young people.

(f) HIV infection and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) among young people

50. Governments and youth organizations should develop specific programmes of information and education for young people so that they can take proper precautions against infection with the HIV virus and the development of AIDS.

5. Environment

51. The natural environment continues to deteriorate, and this is one of the principal concerns of young people worldwide. The natural environment must be maintained and preserved, and the causes of environmental degradation must be fought. Environmentally friendly exploitation of natural resources and environmentally sustainable economic growth will improve human life. Sustainable development has become a key element in the programmes of youth organizations throughout the world. While every segment of society is responsible for maintaining the environmental integrity of the community, youth have a special interest in maintaining a healthy environment and should be involved in setting and implementing appropriate environmental policies.

Targets

(a) Integration of environmental training into education and training programmes

52. Greater emphasis should be given in school curricula to environmental education. Training programmes should be provided to inform teachers of the environmental aspects of their subject matter and to enable them to educate youth on environmentally sound lifestyles.

53. The participation of youth groups in gathering environmental data and in understanding actual environmental action should be encouraged as a means of improving both their knowledge of the environment and their personal concern for proper care of the environment.

(b) Improving exchange of information on environmental issues between developed and developing countries

54. The United Nations Environment Programme should intensify production of audiovisual materials illustrating the connection between environmental degradation in developing and developed countries and describing the outcome of initiatives undertaken in those countries. Governments and youth organizations should initiate and develop youth-to-youth contacts through town-twinning and similar programmes in order to share the experience gained in different countries.

(c) Strengthening participation of youth in protection, preservation and improvement of the environment

55. Governments and youth organizations should initiate research and action programmes in waste minimization and recycling. The participation of young people and their organizations in such programmes can provide good training for their future awareness and action, although young people should not be unduly relied upon to be clean-up agents in case of environmental mishaps or degradation. In developing countries, such programmes may be considered potential income-generating activities that present opportunities for employment in weak labour markets.

6. Drug abuse

56. The vulnerability of young people to drug misuse and abuse has in recent years become a major concern. The consequences of widespread drug abuse and trafficking, particularly for young men and women, are all too apparent.

Targets

(a) Direct participation of youth organizations and youth in demand reduction programmes for young people

57. Drug control strategy at national and international levels consistently emphasizes initiatives aimed at reducing drug abuse among young people. This is reflected in the resolutions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and in the demand reduction programmes of UNDCP. To be effective, demand reduction programmes should be targeted at specific groups of young people considered at risk, and the contents of the programmes should directly respond to the interests and concerns of persons in these groups. Youth organizations can play a key role in designing and implementing programmes to encourage integration of youth into the community and to develop healthy lifestyles, which are the best protection against drug abuse. Programmes could include participation in group activities such as team sports, hiking and camping. Civic organizations could make a contribution by providing equipment and helping to construct playing fields and sports arenas, as well as by helping to transmit organizational skills to young people. The programme should include training of youth leaders in communication and counselling skills and person-to-person communication.

(b) Training medical and paramedical students in the rational use of pharmaceuticals containing narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances

58. As the number of psychotropic drugs increases steadily and their effects and appropriate prescriptive practices are often not fully known, some patients may not be adequately treated and others may become overmedicated. Self-medication with tranquillizers, sleeping-pills and stimulants can also create serious problems, particularly in countries and regions where distribution controls are weak and habit-forming drugs are purchased abroad or diverted from licit channels of distribution.

59. As training in this range of professions and skills is normally transmitted to young men and women in their early twenties or younger, medical curricula could usefully be enlarged to include elements on the effects of habit-forming drugs and appropriate prescriptive techniques. Similarly, job-training programmes for hospital staff and pharmaceutical supply houses should include control techniques designed to avoid leakage or deliberate diversion of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances into illicit channels.

60. UNDCP and WHO have already begun to develop initiatives along these lines, and courses are now also being given at several universities in different countries. WHO, associations of the medical and paramedical professions, pharmaceutical corporations and medical faculties could be asked to formulate model training courses for inclusion in training curricula, and these model courses could be translated and widely disseminated to assist universities and training institutions in ensuring that future cohorts of young students are adequately prepared for their responsibilities.

(c) Treatment and rehabilitation of young people who are drug abusers or drug-dependent

61. The international community places particular emphasis on demand reduction and prevention of the first use of drugs in realistic awareness of the difficulty of achieving effective treatment for abusers and drug-dependent persons,

and of the discouragingly high levels of post-treatment relapse into drug abuse. Identification of comprehensive programmes adapted to the social and cultural context is a difficult task, which is further complicated by controversies over the effectiveness of various approaches to treatment.

62. Research has been undertaken into the possibilities of identifying medication to block cravings for specific drugs without creating secondary dependency, but much remains to be done in this area. The need for such medical advances has become more urgent with the worldwide increase in abuse and addiction, as the growing prevalence of AIDS places added burdens on treatment facilities and compounds the problems of addiction by infection transmitted through contaminated needles.

63. Graduate students in faculties of medicine and chemistry, or in the social services and public administration, could be encouraged to focus their research on such complex issues as medical treatment of drug-dependent persons and abusers, administration of the public health components of drug treatment and rehabilitation, surveys of the effectiveness of different types and combinations of treatment, and comparable rates of recidivism.

64. Of particular interest is the development of treatment techniques involving the family setting and peer groups, and young people can make significant contributions by participating in peer group therapy to facilitate the acceptance of young drug-dependent persons and abusers upon their re-entry into the community. Direct participation in rehabilitation therapy entails close cooperation between youth groups and other community and health services, and WHO and other worldwide medical and mental health organizations could set guidelines for continuing research and for carrying out comparable programmes in different settings whose effectiveness could be evaluated over a given period of time.

(d) Care for young drug abusers and drug-dependent suspects and offenders in the criminal justice and prison system

65. Authorities may consider possible strategies to limit exposure to drug abuse and dependence among young people suspected or convicted of criminal offences. Such strategies could include alternative measures such as daily reporting to police stations or requirements for regular visits to parole officers, and fulfilment of a specified number of hours of community service.

66. Prison authorities should cooperate closely with law enforcement agencies to keep drugs out of the prison system. Prison personnel should be discouraged from tolerating the presence of drugs in penal institutions, as laxity in observing the law brings the entire judicial system into disrepute.

67. Young prisoners who are already drug-dependent should be segregated as far as practicable and targeted as priority candidates for treatment and rehabilitation services. Guidelines and standard minimum rules should be prepared to assist national authorities in law enforcement and prison systems in maintaining the necessary controls and initiating treatment and rehabilitation services. Action along these lines constitutes a long-term advantage to society, as the cycle of dependence, release, repeated offences and repeated incarcerations constitutes a heavy burden on the criminal justice system entirely apart from the wasted lives and personal tragedies which result from drug dependence and criminal behaviour.

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.5/1993/11
28 January 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Thirty-third session
Vienna, 8-17 February 1993
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

REVIEW OF THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION

Critical social situation in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

*E/CN.5/1993/1.

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INTRODUCTION

1. In Africa, the severe economic crisis that engulfed the social sector in the 1980s has not abated. For example, the urban unemployment crisis is continuing to rise in the 1990s and will reach a projected estimate of 44 million people unemployed by the year 2000; the figure for 1991 was 14 million. The fall in real wages and income has left a large segment of the population facing primary poverty. Education, health, food and nutrition, and other areas, are characterized by social retrogression, compounded by an unprecedented growth in population rates. Severe budgetary pressures have culminated in a sharp decline in regional per capita student expenditure. Predictably, gross enrolment ratios, especially at the first level, have declined precipitously, repetition of classes has mounted and attrition rates, especially among female students, are now among the highest in the world, while educational standards have fallen below acceptable levels. In the health sector, as a result of a resurgence of previously controlled diseases, widespread malnutrition and starvation, a lack of universal immunization and drastic cuts in health expenditure, many people in the region are in a precarious state of health. The African socio-political landscape has been considerably aggravated by droughts, especially in southern Africa, where millions of people are threatened by hunger and starvation across 11 or more countries. In addition, the stabilization and structural adjustment regimes adopted by most African countries to deal with the structural imbalances of African economies have not only proved grossly inadequate for dealing with the ultimate goal of development but have considerably exacerbated the crisis in the African social sector.

2. It is against this background that the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to the critical economic situation in Africa, was convened in 1986, in response to General Assembly resolutions 39/29 and 40/40. The Assembly adopted by consensus resolution S-13/2, initiating the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990. Pursuant to those resolutions, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1989/46, requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank, to prepare an in-depth evaluation of the critical social situation in Africa, paying particular attention to any obstacles to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action.

3. The present report, containing an analysis of the recent crisis in selected areas of African social development, is submitted in accordance with the Council's request. In section I, the conclusions reached in the report are summarized; in section II, obstacles to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action are reviewed; section III contains information on major developments in some key areas of interrelated social development issues, such as health, food and nutrition, employment, income and poverty, and population and environment; and section IV deals briefly with specific population groups, namely women, youth and refugees.

I. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

4. The unprecedented economic crisis of the 1980s had calamitous effects on the African social sector and was a major obstacle to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and

Development (1986-1990). The coalescence of a number of internal and external factors, for example, domestic policy failures, compounded by political instability, military conflicts and civil strife, Africa's external debt, inhospitable external environment and the dearth of external resource flows to the region, exacerbated by widespread and indiscriminate implementation of structural adjustment programmes, was also not conducive to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

5. The continued decline in the African economies, made worse by conventional structural adjustment programmes and accentuated by unprecedented population growth rates, has left the African family and household in a crisis of unparalleled dimensions. For example, while the means to tackle the complex problems of social development are reduced, the need for social action is greatly increased. In particular, economic stabilization activities are being carried out while the development of the social sector is being neglected. The social sector (including health and education), dependent on central government budgetary appropriation, suffers as government expenditure allocations are reduced and redirected to activities with higher short-term economic rates of return. Income inequalities are accentuated and poverty is on the increase. In general, the quality of life is deteriorating. In the process, some groups suffer more than others. As is usually the case in such situations, it is the women, the young, the old and the infirm who bear the brunt of the retrenchments. This "social crisis" not only renders the solutions to the day-to-day problems difficult but also adversely affects the long-term socio-economic development of the continent. The African social crisis is greatly exacerbated by severe and persistent drought and lack of genuine democratization, culminating in some countries in insidious civil wars and internal strife. To mitigate the crisis, coherent social development policies need to be put into place, paying particular attention to all dimensions of human development, including population and the environment and the democratization process.

II. OBSTACLES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR AFRICAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT, 1986-1990

6. The final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 shows unequivocally that, despite heroic efforts by most African countries to deal with the structural imbalances of their economies and to implement the Programme of Action, a number of internal and external factors have conspired to hinder those efforts. This led the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly on the Final Review and Appraisal of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 to conclude that, at the end of the five-year period, Africa's socio-economic condition remained precarious and the results of the programme of action had fallen far below expectations. The socio-economic conditions as well as the purchasing power of the African people had continued to worsen and the programme of action had not contributed sufficiently to redressing the situation. This conclusion tallies with the statement in the foreword by the Secretary-General to his report on the final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action that by the end of 1990, "it had become evident that the African economic crisis had indeed deepened and that much more vigorous efforts and greater commitment were needed, particularly on the part of the international community, to place the continent firmly on the road to economic recovery and development, as well as political stability" (A/46/324, p. 3).

7. In relation to the agricultural sector, which is the mainstay of African economies and is centrally pertinent to the mandate of Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990, the commitment to emphasize the food and agricultural sector, for a variety of reasons, did not translate into a significant degree of food security, and the rise in agricultural production certainly fell short of expectations and was not sufficient to stop the decline of per capita agricultural production. This observation applies to most of the other sectors and subsectors in the programme linked to socio-economic development in the region.

8. Of the internal obstacles to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, political instability, civil strife, military conflicts, weak institutions and, often, less than effective policies to mobilize and use domestic resources continued to be both cause and consequence of the poor economic performance of most countries. Elsewhere, the technical incapacity of Governments to implement the programme is cited as yet another internal obstacle.

9. On the exogenous side, the crippling burden of Africa's external debt and the unfavourable terms of trade have profoundly exacerbated the African socio-economic crisis and are extensively cited as being among the most important obstacles to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. Africa's debt rose from \$189 billion in 1985 to \$299 billion in 1992, almost double its 1980 level and equivalent to over 90 per cent of the region's gross domestic product (GDP). 1/ Despite some concessions in bilateral debt restructuring agreements for low-income countries, the gains for sub-Saharan Africa are negligible. As a consequence, Africa was, during the implementation period, a net exporter of financial resources to the rest of the world. Deducting interest and dividend payments, financial transfers to Africa would decline in real terms from \$13 billion in 1986 to \$8.8 billion in 1989. In addition, the ratio of debt to the total value of the region's annual exports has risen to 237 per cent at the end of 1991, while debt service now consumes about 31 per cent of exports of goods and services. 2/

10. For some years, the decline in the prices of Africa's primary commodities has continued unabated. Given the monocultural tendencies in the African economies, the effect of this development has been a sharp decline in the terms of trade, with catastrophic consequences for Africa's financial situation. The social development sector has borne a disproportionate share of this crisis. For many countries, terms-of-trade losses of 10 percentage points may represent a loss of up to 5 per cent of GDP. Taking 1986 alone, ECA estimates that Africa lost \$19 billion in foreign exchange, mainly due to the fall in commodity prices and the depreciation of the dollar.

11. Another significant exogenous factor which was inimical to the implementation of the Programme was the inadequacy of resource flows to the region, which actually declined during the period, as evidenced by the fact that, measured in 1986 prices and exchange rates, net resource flows declined, from \$24.6 billion in 1986 to 23.3 billion in 1990. Official development assistance (ODA) stagnated, in real terms, to around \$16 billion annually during 1986-1990, while private flows fell sharply.

12. Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) (by 1992, over 30 African countries were implementing SAPs), by their very nature, are thought to have been antithetical to the successful implementation of some aspects of the United Nations Programme of Action. For example, the restoration of macro-economic

balances over the short and medium term entails, among other things, the introduction of tight fiscal control measures designed to reduce balance-of-payment deficits, the removal of government subsidies, liberalization of trade, privatization, currency devaluations and the like. Stabilization policies have combined to slow down and retard human development, since a reduction in fiscal deficits entails drastic cuts in public expenditure, especially as it relates to the social sector. Education, training and health were particularly affected by the fiscal crunch. And yet the development, planning and use of human resources was one of the main areas covered in the United Nations Programme of Action. The removal of subsidies had devastating effects on the agricultural sector, culminating in widespread and severe food insecurity and shortages. Stabilization and adjustment policies decisively limited women's access to production resources. For example, data indicate that the massive public and private retrenchments characteristic of the latter part of the 1980s affected women more than men. Government expenditure on health care has declined by 50 per cent in recent years. Given the pre-eminent role of women in the domestic production sector, such excessive cuts in health services put the health of women and children in an extremely precarious position. Severe cuts in education and training and the introduction of user fees have also affected women more than men, as families generally prefer to invest in the education of sons rather than daughters.

III. MAJOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

A. Health

13. The unprecedented socio-economic crisis that engulfed the African region in the 1980s and has continued into the 1990s; it has had a particularly devastating effect on the health sector. Conceptualized as a consumption arena by most policy makers, rather than a critical investment in human development, the sector has been subjected to severe budgetary cuts. Consequently, the health infrastructure is in a critical state of disrepair: essential drugs are either in acutely short supply or are not available at all. The ratio of doctors to patients has become one of the worst in the world: 3/ one doctor serves an average of 22,930 persons. This means that the ratio of physicians to patients has not significantly improved in the last few years, as indicated in table 1 below. This average also masks serious differences between countries, as well as between rural and urban areas within countries. For instance, doctor-to-patient ratios were 1:60,000 in Ethiopia, 1:57,220 in Burkina Faso, 1:46,420 in Guinea, 1:39,730 in Niger, 1:38,360 in Chad and 1:37,960 in Mozambique, compared, for example, with Zambia's ratio of 1:7,150, Nigeria's of 1:7,990, Kenya's of 1:9,970 and Ghana's of 1:14,890. 4/ In addition, declining wages and inhospitable working environments have precipitated a mass exodus of health workers, especially doctors, nurses and medical technologists, in search of better employment opportunities in other regions.

14. Practically all indicators show that morbidity and mortality, including child and infant mortality (see, for example, table 2 below), and maternal mortality, are higher in Africa than in any other continent. In many countries facilities are run-down, staff are generally disillusioned, medicines are limited in quantity and variety, and sometimes are fake or out of date. While the problems in the health sector can partly be blamed on mismanagement, the core problem is lack of financial resources to pay staff and maintain the health infrastructure that burgeoned after independence, only to run into economic crisis. In such circumstances, efforts have continued to be expended

on a top-heavy, largely urban-located hospital system, leaving rural government clinics to stagnate and become incapable of maintaining both proper service and an effective referral system on which the efficient and proper use of hospitals largely depends. One result has been the growth of private urban clinics, which the growing urban poor cannot afford and which are altogether beyond the reach of the majority of rural poor.

Table 1. Ratio of population to health personnel, 1965 and 1984

Country group	1965		1984	
	Population served by each physician	Population served by each nurse	Population served by each physician	Population served by each nurse
Sub-Sahara	33 000	5 400	26 800	2 200
Middle-income countries (including North Africa)	4 000	2 200	2 500	1 000
South Africa	2 000	470	900 (urban) 4 100 (rural) b/	700 a/
Industrialized countries	870	470	450	

Source: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Social Indicators of Development, 1990 (Baltimore, Md., Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Medical Research Council of South Africa, Changing Health in South Africa: Towards Perspectives in Research (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation Publications, 1991). Adapted from "Africa's children, Africa's future", background sectoral papers prepared by the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations Children's Fund for the International Conference on Assistance to African Children, held at Dakar from 25 to 27 November 1991.

a/ For some homelands, 1989.

b/ 1989.

15. On the positive side, the economic crisis has acted as a spur for the promotion of what had been the long overdue need for major emphasis on primary health care (PHC) and preventive health measures. One significant continent-wide activity in preventive health, especially since 1988, has been the Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) of the United Nations system against six major killers of children: diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis and measles. This Programme has been adopted by most African countries and, where the incidence of conflict has been low, by 1991 had realized considerable coverage. That is certainly going some way towards reducing the pressures on health institutions thanks to the savings brought about in curative health care.

16. Malaria, however, which killed almost 1 million children under five years of age in Africa in 1989, cannot of course be covered by EPI. Nor can other

Table 2. Important indicators in the health of African children, 1960-1991

Countries	Mortality rate, children under 5 years of age		Infant mortal- ity rate (under 1 year of age)		Annual number of deaths of children under 5 years of age (thousands)	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Total adult literacy rate		Percentage of age group enrolled in primary school (gross)
	1960	1991	1960	1991			1990	1986-1990	
Algeria	243	61	148	50	53	66	57	96	
Angola	345	292	208	170	153	46	42	93	
Benin	310	149	184	89	34	46	23	66	
Botswana	169	85	116	62	4	60	74	115	
Burkina Faso	363	206	205	120	89	48	18	36	
Burundi	260	181	153	108	47	48	50	69	
Cameroon	270	126	163	66	60	55	54	101	
Central African Republic	294	180	174	106	25	47	38	64	
Chad	325	213	195	125	54	47	30	57	
Congo	220	110	143	83	11	52	57	—	
Côte d'Ivoire	300	127	165	93	77	52	54	70	
Egypt	260	85	168	62	146	61	48	97	
Ethiopia	294	212	175	125	540	46	—	38	
Gabon	287	161	171	97	8	53	61	—	
Ghana	224	137	132	84	90	55	60	75	
Guinea	337	234	203	138	71	44	24	34	
Guinea- Bissau	336	242	200	143	10	43	36	59	
Kenya	202	75	120	52	79	59	69	94	
Lesotho	210	137	149	82	9	60	—	107	
Liberia	310	200	184	131	25	55	40	34	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	269	108	160	72	21	62	64	—	
Madagascar	364	173	219	113	97	55	80	92	
Malawi	365	228	206	144	123	45	—	67	

continued

Table 2 (continued)

Countries	Mortality rate, children under 5 years of age		Infant mortal- ity rate (under 1 year of age)		Annual number of deaths of children under 5 years of age (thousands)	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Total adult literacy rate 1990	Percentage of age group enrolled in primary school (gross) 1986-1990
	1960	1991	1960	1991				
Mali	400	225	200	108	111	45	32	23
Mauritania	321	209	191	120	20	47	34	51
Morocco	265	91	163	72	77	63	50	68
Mozambique	331	292	190	170	209	47	33	68
Namibia	248	120	146	73	8	58	—	—
Niger	321	218	191	127	90	46	28	28
Nigeria	212	188	108	86	1 008	52	51	70
Rwanda	255	189	150	112	71	47	50	69
Senegal	299	182	172	82	61	49	38	58
Sierra Leone	385	253	219	146	53	42	21	53
Somalia	294	211	175	125	95	46	24	15
South Africa	126	72	89	54	88	62	—	—
Sudan	292	169	170	102	189	51	27	50
Togo	305	144	182	88	23	54	43	103
Tunisia	254	58	159	45	13	67	65	115
Uganda	223	190	133	110	174	43	48	70
United Republic of								
Tanzania	249	178	147	112	230	51	91	64
Zaire	300	180	174	117	333	52	72	78
Zambia	220	200	135	112	82	45	73	95
Zimbabwe	181	88	109	61	36	56	67	128

Source: United Nations Children's Fund, 1993.

diseases, especially diarrhoea, which claims the lives of over 1.5 million children annually - the World Health Organization estimates that, in 1991, 42 per cent of all cases of diarrhoea in the world occurred in Africa - and acute respiratory infections, compounded by chronic malnutrition, cause massive morbidity and death among children in Africa. In populations with a high prevalence of malnutrition, pneumonia may account for as much as 80 per cent of infant and child mortality. Compared with other regions of the world, the health of the African child is indeed in a perilous state. Thus, while the total number of deaths of children under five years of age has been decreasing worldwide, the absolute number has been increasing in Africa. In spite of falling death rates, Africa is the only part of the world where the absolute numbers of all deaths and of deaths of children under five are projected to continue to increase into the next century. It is estimated that in 1990 more than 4 million children under five years of age died in Africa. By the year 2000 it is estimated that Africa will account for nearly 39 per cent of all under-five deaths. Annual percentage declines in infant and under-five mortality in Africa for the period 1980-1990 were under 2 per cent a year. In order to attain a 50 per cent reduction by the year 2000, the rates of decline will have to double to over 4 per cent a year. 3/

17. The most pressing challenges to Africa's health landscape in the 1990s are the unprecedented rate of population growth, the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) pandemic, the recrudescence of drug-resistant malaria (of the 110 million cases of malaria occurring worldwide, 80 per cent are to be found in sub-Saharan Africa) and the virtual collapse of effective health infrastructure and services, evidenced by the resurgence of previously controlled diseases.

18. The problem that calls most urgently for consciousness-raising among individuals, families and communities in Africa is HIV/AIDS. In 1991, a senior official of the World Health Organization (WHO), addressing a conference in Namibia, warned that the disease could cut Africa's workforce by 20 per cent in the next five years. Clearly, this would have a tremendous impact on Africa's labour force, as well as compounding the problems for health budgets and facilities and for society at large. Regarding the extent of the HIV/AIDS scourge and its implications for the African region, WHO estimates that, of the now 10-12 million adults and children worldwide who are infected with HIV, up to 6 million are in sub-Saharan Africa, resulting so far in 2 million cases of AIDS. If this trend continues, WHO projections are that the number of cumulative HIV cases will rise to 30-40 million by the end of this century.

19. According to available data, the HIV/AIDS pandemic is increasing at a phenomenal rate in Africa. Thus, despite inadequate epidemiological surveillance, the number of cases reported to WHO by African countries in 1991 and early 1992 was 129,270, compared with 42,167 for the period 1979-1988. Unfortunately, HIV/AIDS coincided with the socio-economic crisis, in which education budgets were being reduced by more than 50 per cent in some countries. Predictably, the system of information, education and communication, on which so much hope of reducing the pandemic is contingent, has been mostly ineffective. To add to the problem, denial, complacency and the stigmatization of infected persons have coalesced to slow prevention and control efforts. Aggressive social mobilization is therefore needed, directed towards community participation, community opinion leaders being central to the campaign, in order to bring HIV/AIDS under effective control.

20. National development plans have tended to emphasize curative medicine and static facilities. Consequently, in many cases over 80 per cent of the registered doctors are to be found in primary cities, serving only 20-30 per cent of the total population. In a number of African countries, as much as 30-40 per cent of the public expenditure on health goes to one, or a few, teaching hospitals, which cater for an insignificant percentage of the total population, mainly in urban areas. More recently, however, there has been some change in orientation, so that while secondary and tertiary health care continue to feature prominently, more and more emphasis is being directed towards PHC, with a view to providing coverage in all-outpatient facilities, towards mother and child health care (MCH) and family planning, and towards improving drug supplies by, inter alia, closing off the routes by which they are diverted to the black market.

21. Cost-sharing in the health sector has a number of shortcomings. For instance, there is some evidence that it can undermine PHC, especially in rural areas, thereby further exacerbating the general urban bias in health care provision. Thus, following increases in user charges in the latter part of the 1980s, less frequent use of government health centres by the poor and by women, and a shift in demand to the private sector, including traditional healers and unlicensed drug sellers, was reported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 4/ It is therefore recommended that PHC should be free and universal, though there could be some charges for medicine and hospital care. The latter would encourage people to use their local clinic first, with the result that hospitals would benefit from more efficient use of the referral system. Low-income families and children under five should be exempted from hospital charges.

B. Food and nutrition

22. Currently, more than 20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa face exceptional food emergencies and more than 40 million Africans confront the threat of famine. 5/ According to a 1991 report by the World Food Programme in Food Aid Review, consequent to the continuous decline in per capita food production, about one quarter of the African population - over 100 million people - do not consume enough food to allow an active working life. Even more suffer in years when crops fail and food prices rise. The number of undernourished people in Africa is projected to increase to nearly 200 million by the year 2000. One of the consequences of food insecurity is the prevalence of severe malnutrition - especially protein-energy-malnutrition - which affected 30 per cent of the under-fives in Africa in 1990. Such staggering numbers of malnourished people have tremendous ramifications for Africa's long-term growth and development.

23. Consequently, improving nutrition is recognized as one of Africa's principal tasks. After being a net exporter of food in the early 1960s, the continent became a net importer of food in the 1970s and 1980s. According to the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP), African agriculture needs to be transformed so as to achieve an improved balance between export crops and food production, with price support policy (PSP) playing a key part in this. In the past, PSPs have been used successfully in Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe to achieve self-sufficiency in staple foods. It is significant that these achievements owed much to consultations with the producers of those crops. A built-in system of monitoring the achievement of objectives is important for PSP in the variable local conditions within Africa.

C. Education and literacy

24. Increased fees and cost-sharing in Africa's social sector is a direct consequence of Governments having to implement orthodox structural adjustment regimes. Applied across the board, the policy creates dilemmas and problems for the entire spectrum of social sector development. Education, literacy, training and health are critical investments in human resources and should be viewed as such, rather than treating them as arenas of consumption, which can easily be subjected to severe budgetary cuts whenever there is a fiscal crisis. In education, not only have numerous studies shown that the returns are highest for the first few years of schooling, but cost-sharing can exclude the very poor, who represent a major part of Africa's population and on whom so much future productivity, recovery and development depend. 6/ Education, especially for females, is particularly important, as it branches out into so many other areas that are inseparably linked to the entire development process. For instance, female education is shown to be inversely correlated to high levels of fertility, which exert insupportable pressure on limited social infrastructures. Female education also has a positive effect on the nutritional status of families, as well as on other areas, thereby reducing Africa's infant and maternal morbidity and mortality, which rank among the highest in the world.

25. In Africa, the drop-out rate is aggravated in most countries by the need to pay school fees and other educational costs, especially those involved in the loss of children's labour. Low female enrolment and high female drop-out and repeater rates are still characteristic of many African countries' educational sectors. Yet user charges are bound to roll back the advances made in sub-Saharan Africa in female education, because families with limited resources will tend to invest in their sons' education first, since their daughters are lost to them when they marry. 6/

26. There are now indications that gross enrolment ratios, especially at the first level, are declining in sub-Saharan Africa. Disillusionment is rapidly setting in as parents find their children not only unable to secure the much-hoped-for wage employment but also confused in terms of the farming on which the future of most of their families depends. In addition, declining real wages, consequent to spiralling inflation, have culminated in the departure or irregular attendance of qualified teachers, thereby exacerbating the crisis in the educational sector.

27. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a process of declining school enrolment, rather than the consolidation of school systems, is to be found in many countries of sub-Saharan Africa. In many instances, primary school does not provide real education for self-reliance for the 95 per cent who do not go on to secondary schools. The poor availability of facilities, equipment and supplies may add to the problem of absenteeism. 7/ Indeed, in many African countries the massive achievements in quantitative educational growth that characterized the post-independence era have been poisoned by qualitative decay, not only in the quality of learning but also in physical equipment.

28. After extraordinary gains, African Governments now not only have to try to implement policies of consolidation, but also to stop the rot. At the same time, there is vibrant activity in the private sector of education, especially in urban areas. This covers a wide spectrum, for example, day-care centres and computer training establishments. So various compromises between government

and private sectors may be timely; but the very poor, as long as they remain very poor, cannot benefit from this trend.

29. The emphasis of United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNESCO has in recent years been on basic education through the early stages of primary schooling. This is a key foundation if both rural and urban poor are to contribute their due quota to social development. The subject of user charges has already been raised. Governments are generally likely to maintain most of their financial, administrative and other commitments to primary education, and to expand user charges more strongly at higher levels of both education and specialized training; but primary school fees have become more common, as many countries have had to reduce their expenditure on education because of the economic crisis. The introduction of cost-recovery schemes means that drop-out rates have risen and education has become inaccessible to the very poor. Cutting back on expenses because of the economic crisis and the introduction of cost sharing have meant that crucial priorities have had to be shelved.

30. A common characteristic in African education is that greater drop-out rates among female students combine with higher male and female drop-out rates, generally in rural schools, which themselves are disadvantaged compared with schools in urban areas, among other things because the quality of teaching is inferior. As in many parts of the developing world, girls are taken out of school before or at about the time they first menstrate, partly so that they do not form alliances that are outside parental control.

31. Given the present and foreseeable realities in Africa, all students should be exposed to entrepreneurial training. Adult training in numeracy is appreciated by petty traders, however, many of whom are rural women who need to be numerate to be able to make use of improved credit availability.

32. In Africa, 70 per cent of the adult population remains illiterate, and in rural Africa the proportion is 90 per cent. These high rates of illiteracy impede the introduction of modern development ideas and technologies and limit people's chances of improving their situation and claiming the rights and privileges that are due to them. It is in the rural areas that such opportunities and skills are most needed, and it is the rural women, especially, who are most often illiterate. Moreover, it is not just that the poor need help; rather, Africa will remain debilitated if they are not able to contribute to their own development and that of their countries. The interdependence of economic and social sectors leads to the need to invest in human resources. Social sector policies influence economic performance through the level of investment in human resources. Similarly, the tension between the impact of adjustment on women and the impact of women on adjustment is similar to that between the need for poverty alleviation measures, on the one hand, and the need for the adjustment package to include measures that will empower the poor to make an economically efficient contribution to adjustment, on the other hand. 6/ Since it is now a well-established fact that adult literacy programmes tend to benefit men more than women, special efforts should be made to target women.

33. In addition, it has been found in Ethiopia, for example, that quite a sizeable proportion of pupils in the first grade have been drawn from the younger graduates of the literacy campaigns. Many of these in rural areas are in their teens and twenties, compounding the disadvantage of females: female literacy graduates over 12 years of age are, unlike males, often prevented by

tradition from continuing with their education by entering elementary schools. That is probably one reason why daytime adult education classes are so popular among women. Evening classes after dark again run into conflict with traditional norms, especially in rural areas. 6/ These facts need to be kept in mind when Governments attempt to expand non-formal education for women, otherwise the women may again be at a disadvantage, and rural women more than urban women.

34. The problem of gender bias, or "gender typing", in school subjects still affects non-formal education as well. Over a decade ago, ECA estimated that domestic science made up more than 50 per cent of all the non-formal education offered to women. That situation still needs to be adjusted to meet what women themselves perceive as their learning requirements, such as numeracy that leads to cash-making skills. This gives weight to the findings of macro-level studies, namely, that countries with more literate populations have higher economic growth rates.

D. Employment

35. The unemployment crisis that characterized the African economy in the 1980s is continuing into the 1990s. Thus, estimates indicate that total productive employment (see table 3 below) expanded by 2.4 per cent in 1991, while the labour force grew by about 3.2 per cent. Projections made in 1992 by the ILO/Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa (JASPA) are that this trend will continue, as unemployment rises from its current levels of 14 million to 44 million by the end of this century. In urban areas the employment problem is caused, on the one hand, by limited opportunities for self-employment, lack of investable capital and excess capacity in existing enterprises, which limit the growth of demand for labour. On the other hand, the unprecedented migration of rural populations (displaced by war and the collapse of agriculture and rural services) to the urban areas tends to increase the supply of labour. In some areas, drought, degradation of the physical environment, failing agriculture, war and rapid population growth have coalesced to hold down the numbers of people in productive employment.

36. Despite the central position of agriculture in the African economies and societies - it occupies about two thirds of the labour force and 80 per cent of the working women - there was a serious decline in employment in agriculture in the latter part of the 1980s. The active population is heavily concentrated in agriculture, except for North Africa, where there is more sectoral differentiation. The decline in opportunities for agricultural employment should, however, be linked with suspected high rates of underemployment, especially in subsistence agriculture, where productivity is depressed because of lack of credit and of marketing outlets and not so much because of limits in inputs and technology. Because of all these factors, the rural areas are the genesis of Africa's employment problem.

37. An excessive brain drain is occurring simultaneously with the appearance of shortages in the supply of specific skills in the labour market. This disequilibrium is in part a reflection of the structural problems of the labour market. Wage employment, which in the case of Africa brings in more income, covers a small part of the population, and the prospects for productive family employment and self-employment in the rural areas are severely limited by declining labour and land productivity in agriculture. The primary sector is still undeveloped, as, indeed, are the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy. The growing numbers of urban poor can be related more particularly

Table 3. Paid employment in selected African countries, 1982-1991
(Thousands)

Country	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Benin	73.6	81.1	73.9	80.8	77.2	77.7	78.3	47.3	45.7
Botswana	100.2	100.5	110.0	116.2	130.1	150.2	169.5	175.6	2 090.0
Burundi	44.2	40.8	44.1	44.7	47.3	49.8	54.3	48.6	47.3
Côte d'Ivoire	446.8	432.5	417.2	406.0	410.0	405.9	404.4	399.9	385.0
Ghana	279.6	312.0	450.8	464.3	413.7	394.3	306.8	..	..
Kenya	1 046.0	1 093.3	1 119.7	1 174.4	1 220.5	1 264.5	1 311.0	1 355.5	1 409.0
Malawi	329.8	391.4	384.4	401.6	417.2	412.0	432.1	441.5	451.1
Mauritius	194.2	191.5	195.7	209.5	230.7	252.3	267.2	270.5	278.8
Niger	25.7	20.3	21.4	22.5	26.1	27.9	26.0	28.0	29.5
Seychelles	18.5	17.5	17.9	18.2	18.8	19.5	21.2	22.3	23.5
Swaziland	77.4	78.7	77.4	72.9	76.4	82.7	85.9	..	..
Togo	43.7	66.9	61.8	61.2	62.0	63.9	..	..	..
Zambia	367.5	363.8	365.2	361.5	360.5	361.8	360.7	359.6	356.5

Source: Yearbook of Labour Statistics, 1992 (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1992), as quoted in International Labour Organisation/Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa (JASPA), African Employment Report, 1992.

Note: Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available.

to the manifest underdevelopment of the manufacturing sector. Employment in the public sector accounts for a large part of the wage employment but also has a large component of underemployment. By far the largest proportion of the unemployed are females and young people.

38. The narrow assumptions underlying concepts of employment and related training are at the heart of the mismatch between training and employment. On a more day-to-day level, as with other social development projects, technical training institutions in Africa have suffered so much from cutbacks resulting from the economic crisis that their courses are often mainly theoretical, because the facilities for practical training are either absent or unrepaired. If, however, such facilities and equipment are present and used, trainees frequently find, when they start work, that the equipment they have been trained for is not available.

E. Income and poverty

39. Compared with the rest of the world (see table 4), per capita income in sub-Saharan Africa has continued to decline, with disastrous effects on the living standards of a significant proportion of the population now living in primary poverty. This trend is confirmed by data from UNDP, 8/ which indicate that of the 20 countries with the lowest Human Development Indicators (HDI), 18 are to be found in Africa. Consequently, sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in which poverty is expected to worsen, with significant increases in the proportion of the population living in poverty. The World Bank estimates that this number will increase by nine million annually. The proportion of the population living below the poverty line in sub-Saharan Africa was 47.6 per cent in 1985 and 47.8 per cent in 1990 and this is expected to rise to 49.7 per cent in 2000. Thus, nearly half of the population will live below the poverty line, which the World Bank estimates to be \$420 annual income per capita. 9/ In other words, the number of people living in absolute poverty in sub-Saharan Africa will have risen from 181 million in 1986 and 216 million in 1990 to 304 million by the year 2000.

F. Population and the environment

40. The inseparable link between environmental stability and long-term socio-economic development is now widely accepted. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s contains the following statements: "the problems of environment and development should be tackled in an integrated and balanced manner" and "Africa is fully committed to the promotion of sustainable development at all levels of socio-economic activity" (General Assembly resolution 46/151, annex, sect. II, para. 17) thereby acknowledging the interrelationship between environment and development. In Africa, as elsewhere among the poor countries, the single most important factor behind environmental degradation is poverty. Thus, the search for energy, over-grazing, over-cultivation and the application of such archaic agricultural methods as slash-and-burn, accelerate deforestation, which ultimately leads to increased soil erosion and floods. Furthermore, environmental degradation diminishes the capacity of affected countries to produce food, a problem that is frequently compounded by perennial droughts, which are themselves a consequence of environmental instability.

41. Environmental sustainability can only be maintained by paying particular attention to the issue of human development, because of its ramifications on overall socio-economic development. Most of the World Bank's World Development

Table 4. Growth in real per capita income, 1960-1992
(Average annual percentage change)

Country group	1960-1970	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990	1991 a/	1990-1992
High income countries	4.1	2.4	2.4	2.1	0.7	2.1
Developing countries	3.3	3.0	1.2	-0.2	-0.2	2.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.6	0.9	-0.9	-2.0	-1.0	0.3
Asia and the Pacific	2.5	3.1	5.1	3.9	4.2	4.8
East Asia	3.6	4.6	6.3	4.6	5.6	5.7
South Asia	1.4	1.1	3.1	2.6	1.5	3.1
Middle East and North Africa	6.0	3.1	-2.5	-1.9	-4.6	1.6
Latin America and Caribbean	2.5	3.1	-0.5	-2.4	0.6	2.2
Europe	4.9	4.4	1.2	-3.8	-8.6	1.9
Eastern Europe	5.2	5.4	0.9	-8.3	-14.2	1.6

Source: World Bank, World Development Report 1992: Development and the Environment, World Development Indicators (Washington, D.C., Oxford University Press, 1992), as quoted in International Labour Organisation/Jobs and Skills Programme for Africa, African Employment Report, 1992.

a/ Estimated.

Report 1992 is devoted to the issue of development and the environment. On poverty and the environment, the argument is made, that "alleviating poverty is both a moral imperative and a prerequisite for environmental sustainability. The poor are both victims and agents of environmental damage". 10/ Thus, policies for development should include investment in people through education, health and nutrition, and family planning. "Investments in water and sanitation and in pollution abatement will also benefit the poor by improving their health and productivity. But it is equitable economic growth, coupled with education and health services, that is most urgently needed. This will enable the poor to make environmental investments that are in their own long-term interest. It will be essential for accelerating the demographic transition; better-off and better-educated couples have fewer children." 11/

42. While the relationship between rapid population growth rates and environmental damage is not a unilinear one, in areas of relative and extreme land scarcity rapid population increases are known to be antithetical to environmental stability, as they frequently exert undue pressure on land. Of this relationship, Agenda 21 asserts that "the human dimensions are key elements to consider in this intricate set of relationships and they should be adequately taken into consideration in comprehensive policies for sustainable development. Such policies should address the linkages of demographic trends and factors, resource use, appropriate technology dissemination, and development. Population policy should also recognize the role played by human beings in environmental and development concern". 12/

43. In specific relation to agricultural production, the World Bank's World Development Report 1992 asserts that:

"Agricultural stagnation in sub-Saharan Africa is a particularly clear example of the mutually reinforcing nexus of poverty, population growth, and environmental damage. The slowly evolving intensification that occurred in the first half of this century was disrupted by the sharp acceleration of population growth in the past four decades. Low agricultural productivity, caused mainly by poor incentives and poor provision of services, has delayed demographic transition and encouraged land degradation and deforestation, which in turn lowered productivity. Africa's forest declined by 8 per cent in the 1980s; 80 per cent of Africa's pasture and range areas show signs of damage; and in such countries as Burundi, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritania and Rwanda fallow periods are often insufficient to restore soil fertility." 13/

IV. SPECIAL POPULATION GROUPS

A. Women

44. Women are one of the key contributors to development, whether as members of households or heads of households (including single households). There is a long history, from the time of the colonial administrators, of assumptions that land in Africa is "owned" by household heads, and that, for all intents and purposes, household heads are men. This has been unfortunate on many counts. In most of Africa, people have had rights to the use of land, often for life, rather than privately owning it in the narrow capitalist sense, and the imported assumptions usually ignored women's rights to land. These assumptions still persist, and they extend to the receipt of inputs and membership

of non-traditional key decision-making associations. The assumptions ride rough shod over intra-household rights, duties, exchange systems and accounting units. As pointed out by the World Bank in its World Employment Report 1991, the nature of intra-household markets, compounded by the bias in farm support services towards male accounting units, has led to a misallocation of household-level resources. Such markets are not static in character. Per capita resources alter, as do opportunities above the household level, and to say that freeing prices will lead to the most efficient use of household resources is to ignore the terms of which intra-household markets operate.

45. Moreover, government policies that place great emphasis on long-established tradeable crops lead to women losing their rights over land because the household reduces the land available to the crops that women have traditionally controlled, especially food crops. This is particularly critical on smaller farms. This in turn diminishes women's prerogative to take decisions. Adjustment, by giving price incentives to tradeables, essentially exercises the same forces as the colonial promotion of cash crops. The result of that experience has been the misuse of women's labour to the point where children's labour is used more intensively. There is nothing to suppose that adjustment programmes will have a different effect. 6/

46. With land privatization, the mother's need for children's assistance will most likely increase as she is distanced from traditional support networks. This is bound to affect school enrolment and may indeed be one of a number of reasons for recent falls in enrolment in some parts of the continent. Nutrition will also be influenced detrimentally. One of the main policies required in promoting the productivity of low-income farmers without threatening the nutrition, health and welfare of women and children is to give priority to programmes geared towards the production of basic food crops such as yams, coco yams, millet, guinea corn, groundnuts, and palm oil. Supporting changes are needed in research, extension and the supply of inputs, all of which are biased against smaller farmers and against food crops. 6/ They are thus particularly biased against female agricultural producers and their ability to market their products and care for their families.

47. One of the worst aspects of ignoring the traditional position of women is the way in which policies regarding access to credit are implemented when it comes to private property, land privatization and the requirement of collateral.

48. The World Bank sees land adjudication and registration as an important pillar of agricultural adjustment. The change from a system of sharing, according to need, in the joint patrimony of conjugal dependants and progeny to a system of private ownership is expected to enhance farmers' incentives to invest in higher productivity. In the vast majority of cases, land is registered in the names of men. Some female heads of household succeed in gaining ownership, but very rarely do married women become the registered owners.

49. The latter are in a very disadvantageous position when it comes to obtaining credit, since without ownership they have a problem with financial institutions regarding collateral; what matters here is the owner, not the user, of the land. So women's access to and control over resources are damaged, which lowers their status both in the family and in society. This can have telling results on health and nutrition, education and training. If the acreage of household plots for self-provisioning agriculture incorporated in typical

schemes is to be emulated by the new private male farmer, then the traditional resource base for women's traditional economic responsibilities disappears and until new norms of responsibility corresponding to access to resources appear, the maintenance and reproduction of the family could be in chaos. 6/

B. Youth

50. As African nations became independent, new opportunities and, especially, new expectations opened up. Education rapidly expanded and stimulated this trend still further. Educated youth, often encouraged by their families, looked to urban centres for a future in the modern world. Many seemed persuaded that rural areas were backward, offering them no bright new future; remaining there - or returning there - was perceived as tantamount to failure, and they lived in hopes of finding "educated" employment. Thus, increasing numbers of school leavers are now unemployed and the duration of unemployment is getting longer and longer. In this regard, one of the social issues that has exercised Governments in recent decades has been how to occupy youth who have passed out of the educational system but are without work.

51. Youth unemployment, as indicated above, overlaps the issue of internal migration. In Africa, as in so many developing parts of the world, it has been young people and males who have dominated rural-urban migration. This massive movement into the cities creates a real danger of rural stagnation, stagnation that in Africa generally includes not only rural areas but also many small and intermediate urban centres. This phenomenon touches on a conundrum epitomized in the urban drift and ever-rising urban unemployment: the relations between education and development. Even emphasis on technical and vocational training cannot easily solve the problem; such training needs an economic context into which those trained can be absorbed. At the same time, the key economic sector in most African countries is agriculture, on which for the time being the overall economic context and the labour force rely. So there is a vicious circle, which must be broken.

C. Refugees and displaced persons

52. According to the most recent estimates by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are approximately 17 million refugees worldwide - almost half of these are said to be in the African region (and about half of all African refugees are thought to be in the Horn of Africa). Thus, the refugee problem has become one of the most critical social development issues in Africa. The problem is symptomatic of the inadequate protection of human rights and extremes of poverty and represents a major loss of productive potential. Refugees are also a great burden on host Governments and host communities.

53. Internally displaced persons, now estimated to number 17 million, have frequently fallen between various stools, sometimes being forced into begging and other basic survival strategies. In addition to the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their national committees have played a major role in assisting the displaced, especially in cases of conflict. Quantifying, let alone adequately assisting, the displaced is a daunting task. When a city or town is swollen with displaced persons, there is some possibility of making a fair approximation of the number involved. That is more difficult in rural areas, as are the

logistics of providing aid, though it is partly in search of the latter that displaced people head for towns.

54. The policy of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees places increased emphasis on a holistic approach to the problem of refugees and displacement. This was succinctly enunciated in the statement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the Third Committee of the General Assembly on 7 November 1991, when she set out a three-point strategy of prevention, emergency response capacity and solutions. Having commented that ethnic and national tensions, which had been dormant for long, were now emerging, the High Commissioner distanced herself from overly legalistic and bureaucratic distinctions between the displaced and refugees and said that the plight of the internally displaced must be an important component of the strategy of prevention (A/C.3/46/SR.34, paras. 31 and 33).

55. The High Commissioner pointed out that voluntary repatriation must be accompanied by efforts to create proper conditions for repatriation as part of the national development effort (*ibid.*, para. 35). The implication is that Governments in Africa have to incorporate this process into their national plans and pay greater attention to them in social and economic development terms.

Notes

1/ See V. P. Diejomaoh, "The African employment challenges of the 1990s and the role of the social partners in employment promotion", paper presented to the International Labour Organisation/African Regional Labour Administration Centre Seminar on the Social Partners and Structural Adjustment, held at Harare from 3 to 7 August 1992.

2/ "Preliminary assessment of the performance of the African economy in 1992 and prospects for 1993", end-of-year statement by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, 1992.

3/ "Africa's children, Africa's future", background sectoral paper prepared by the Organization for African Unity and the United Nations Children's Fund for the International Conference on Assistance to African Children, held at Dakar from 25 to 27 November 1992.

4/ United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 1991 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1991).

5/ "Food security in Africa", African Recovery, No. 6, September 1992.

6/ Ingrid Palmer, Gender and Population in the Adjustment of African Economies: Planning for Change (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1991).

7/ World Education Report (Paris, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1991).

8/ United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 1992 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992).

9/ International Labour Organisation/Job and Skills Programme for Africa, African Employment Report (Addis Ababa, International Labour Office, 1992).

10/ World Bank, World Development Report 1992: Development and the Environment (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992), chap. 1, p. 30.

11/ Ibid., pp. 31-32.

12/ See the report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (A/CONF.151/26), vol. I, chap. 5, para. 5.3. (The final version of the report will be issued as a United Nations sales publication.)

13/ World Bank, World Development Report 1992 ..., Overview, pp. 7-8.